

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

UNCLAS STATE 219006

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CGEN, APER, AFSP

SUBJECT: REDESIGNATION OF REGIONAL CONSULAR OFFICER
POSITION

REF: (A) LAGOS 9134, (B) LAGOS 10127

1. SUMMARY: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REGIONAL CONSULAR OFFICER POSITION IN LAGOS WAS THE RESULT OF CAREFUL ANALYSIS OF CONSULAR PROBLEMS IN THE REGION WHICH COULD BEST BE ADDRESSED BY A CIRCUIT RIDER. THE SITUATION HAS NOT CHANGED SUFFICIENTLY TO ALTER THE DEPARTMENT'S DECISION. CONSEQUENTLY, THE POST'S REQUEST TO ABOLISH THE POSITION AND RECONSTITUTE IT AS CHIEF OF THE VISA SECTION IS DENIED. THE DEPARTMENT REMINDS POST, HOWEVER, THAT AN ADDITIONAL AMERICAN POSITION FOR LAGOS IS PENDING IN THE FY 1978 SUPPLEMENTAL CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATION, AND THAT THE REGIONAL CONSULAR OFFICER IS AVAILABLE FOR PART-TIME ASSISTANCE TO THE CONSULAR SECTION.
END SUMMARY.
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2. REGIONAL CONSULTING CONSULAR OFFICER POSITIONS WERE ESTABLISHED TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE AND ASSISTANCE TO FIRST-TOUR CONSULAR OFFICERS IN ONE OFFICER CONSULAR SECTIONS. IDEALLY, SUCH POSTS SHOULD BE STAFFED BY EXPERIENCED JUNIOR OFFICERS AND WHENEVER POSSIBLE, THIS IS DONE. HOWEVER, UNTIL SUCH TIME AS OPTIMUM STAFFING CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED,

REGIONAL CONSULTING CONSULAR OFFICERS MUST BE UTILIZED TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE TECHNICAL ADVISORY ASSISTANCE TO CONSULAR OPERATIONS AT THESE POSTS. WHILE TDY ASSIGNMENTS TO COVER STAFFING GAPS MAY OCCASIONALLY BE NECESSARY, THE DEPARTMENT DOES NOT SEE THE ROLE OF THE CIRCUIT RIDER AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR EACH POST'S OWN BACK-UP CONSULAR OFFICER. NOR DOES THE DEPARTMENT SEE THAT THE NEED FOR THE ROVING CONSULAR OFFICER HAS LESSENED; RATHER, IT IS MORE URGENT THAN EVER. CONSEQUENTLY, THE DEPARTMENT CANNOT AGREE TO ABOLISH THE POSITION.

3. THE DEPARTMENT IS EVER MINDFUL OF THE BURGEONING WORK-LOADS AND STAFFING NEEDS AT LAGOS. AS POST IS AWARE, AN ADDITIONAL AMERICAN POSITION IS PROGRAMMED FOR LAGOS FROM THE FY 1978 SUPPLEMENTAL CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET REQUEST, WHICH IS STILL AWAITING CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATION. THIS POSITION WILL GIVE THE SECTION ADDED DEPTH AND HOPEFULLY ALLOW THE DESIGNATION OF ANOTHER OFFICER AS THE VISA UNIT CHIEF.

4. IN ADDITION, THE DEPARTMENT PREFERS TO MAINTAIN THE POSITION IN LAGOS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE DURING PEAK WORK PERIODS AND THE REGIONAL CONSULAR OFFICER IS ENCOURAGED TO SCHEDULE TRIPS ACCORDINGLY GIVEN RESOURCE RESTRAINTS AND CONSULAR NEEDS, THE ABOVE APPEARS TO BE THE OPTIMUM SOLUTION. CHRISTOPHER
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